Hi. Thanks for answering my call for people to interview about Flash games. I have a bunch of questions outlined below and the more in-depth your answers, the better, but please don't feel pressured to answer every one of them.

Please note in this list of questions: when I ask you about "Flash games" specifically, I mean the ones released in-browser between 1999 and 2021. If you're still making games with Flash, great! I'd like to hear about it. But since this book is mainly focused on Flash games in the browser, I'd like answers based around that context.

Personal History

- **Tell me about yourself.**

My name is Tyler Glaiel, I started making games in flash back in 2001 when I was 11. I had a pirated copy of Flash 4 that I was learning how to make simple animations in, and I realized you could tween a button around and trying to click on it was basically a game. I made a game called "Pigeon Pooper" using that concept, burned copies of it onto a CD with a printed label, and tried to sell them to people for $5 each at my middle school. I sold like 5 copies of it.

A couple of years later I started putting the games I was making online on my website, and discovered Newgrounds at the same time. The fact that the submission process on Newgrounds was instant (you would click a few buttons and then the game would be on the site, getting hundreds of plays right away) seemed insane to me, and I got super involved in the site after that. Everything about NG was like perfectly designed to motivate me to make better and better things (chasing those community awards and frontpage features), while meeting a lot of cool people at the same time.

- **What Flash games did you make?**

Lots, but these are the "notable" ones:

Pigeon Pooper - my first game, also made a sequel, Pigeon Pooper #2

Magnetism - the first game I made that was "good enough" to get featured on the front page of Newgrounds) - It went pretty viral as well, driving a lot of traffic to my website and earning me actual money for the first time. I caught a friend playing it in my highschool without knowing I made it, that was a trip.

-Krazy Kar- - My most popular game on newgrounds by view count. Also I only made in a couple hours. I titled it with a "-" in front of the name so it would sort alphabetically at the top of any collection it was put in, and that apparently worked extremely well.

supersoldier - A game I made with Dan Paladin. After Magnetism was a hit I got an ego and messaged every "famous" artist on newgrounds asking to make a game. A bunch said yes. Dan just sent me a file of art from a failed prototype and said I could do something with it, so I did that. He was pretty impressed by my prototype and did actually put some effort into polishing it up a bit after that.

NightStrike - a game I made with MindChamber, also a result of 15 year old me with an ego asking every artist on newgrounds to make a game with me

Aqua Slug - Not my most popular game, but the one that people seem to remember the most. “Metal Slug with Squirtguns” made for a “Summer Games” competition in 3 weeks. Complicated by the fact that I never actually played metal slug. It was actually a pretty complete game and probably the most “Full” flash game I made, which is why people remember it I guess.

Paths / Paths 2 - a take on the “mouse avoider” genre where you control the obstacles instead of the mouse. Essentially.

The Nutcracker - A christmas minigame collection set to The Nutcracker Suite. Was actually quite fun, but an update to flash made it crash the browser (until I recompiled it like 5 years later)

Aether - my first collaboration with Edmund Mcmillen, somehow made in 2 weeks

Closure - A stylish black and white puzzle game that led to my first commercial project, a PS3 remake/sequel to Closure also called Closure. This marks the start of gamedev being my career and not just a hobby. The Behemoth funded the full version of the game, and I dropped out of college to work on it full time. Closure was the first and probably only flash game to use adobe’s “Pixel Bender” technology.

AVGM - another collaboration with Edmund, the first “Incremental Clicker” game on the internet yet it never gets credit for that for some reason. Curious. WE INVENTED THAT GENRE

Tetraform - The last “Big” flash game I ever made, right before going full time on Closure.

Fracuum - A game jam game I made right after the console version of Closure came out. Ended up being one of my most popular flash games, in some sense the last “real” flash game I ever made. (there were one or two more smaller things after that, including **Number**, a joke game I made in 20 minutes that also ended up being quite popular)

The End Is Nigh - Not made in flash, but the first commercial game I released that used my custom C++ flash-rendering engine for its art. So the art was still done in flash, being able to use all those neat flash tricks and workflows in a “Real Game” without any of the technical baggage that comes with flash. It’s pretty cool. We’re still using that tech.

- **How else were you involved in the Flash community?**

  I was very active on the Newgrounds forums

- **What was your first Flash game that you played, and on what site?**
- **What do you remember about the community? How they interacted, voted, shared games with eachother?**

  I just remember how approachable everyone was. Everyone just wanted to help each other make better games, grow and improve together. There wasn’t any focus on ARPUs or sales or anything, just making games. The

people who ran the platforms also made games themselves and shared this same goal. I had Tom Fulp on my AIM friends list when I was 14. Being able to freely talk to the owner of a huge platform like that is just unheard of today. But it was hugely important to me as a kid.

- **What are your favorite Flash games? Both massive and obscure.**
- **What was your favorite portal and why? Any runner-ups?**

  Obviously Newgrounds

- **What would you consider your strongest memory of Flash gaming? It doesn't have to be necessarily the best.**
- **Do you remember any portals, users or general stories that a casual community member might not know of? I'd love to get some more obscure stories into the book.**

  Man there were some scummy smaller portals out there. One in particular (I won't name names) threatened me with libel for telling a (true) story about how much of a scumbag the owner of the site was on a private forum one time.

- **Overall, what is your favorite part of Flash games, major or minor?**

Developing for Flash

- **What made you consider developing a Flash game?**
- **How difficult was it for you to get started?**
- **What was the first Flash game you released, and on what site? What do you remember about its release?**
- **What drew you to making Flash games specifically? Did other platforms like Shockwave, Unity, Java or so on carry any appeal?**
- **Did you work alone? If not, who did you work with, and how did you meet them?**

  I made a lot of games by myself, but I was never great at art. After I got a couple of good games done on my own I started working with artists on basically everything, very often a different artist each time. I just liked collaborating with everyone.

- **Can you give me just a quick, point-by-point overview of how you developed games? The technical side of things purely - how you program for Flash, how you create resources like graphics & sound (if applicable), how functionality improved & things changed in later versions of Flash, anything you can think of that might be noteworthy or interesting to the nerdy-minded.**
- **Were there any interesting technical challenges you had to face while making a game in Flash?**
- **What was the development community like? Any forums or boards or other sites that are worthy of mention?**

- **Did you make games as a hobby, on the side, or a full time job? Did it ever get 'serious', and if so, when?**
- **What was your first "viral game", what were the circumstances around it, and what was it like inside your head and on your site/portal entry when it did go viral?**
- **Did you ever have a strategy when making games, marketing or business wise? Or did you just work on what was fun?**
- **What was it like working with Flash portals like Kongregate? What sort of deals would you make, if any? Did you ever use something like Flash Game License, and if so, can you tell me about your experience with it?**

I pretty much only used Newgrounds and Armor Games for sponsorships. I was getting into my commercial projects by the time Flash Game License got big, so I never really got too involved in that.

- **How much did the community support you, and how did they contribute to your success?**
- **Were you around pre-and-post Macromedia era Flash? Are you able to draw a comparison between the two companies' handling of the technology?**
- **Do you think Adobe buying Flash at the end of the day caused more damage than it would have if Macromedia hadn't been bought out?**

Yeah, Adobe buying flash was basically its death knell. AS3 was very cool (even though many disagree, it did result in a lot opening up for flash), but their willingness to just give up on it once smartphones came out and they couldn't get their shit together and make it run well on them is pretty damning. It didn't need to be this way. It should have been given to a company that actually cared about it.

The End of Days

- **At what point did Flash go into "freefall" in the public consciousness, in your point of view?**

The Steve Jobs memo on it.

- **Have you ever met anyone blatantly anti-Flash or anti-Flash games specifically? Did you try to change their mind? Were you successful?**

A lot of the internet kind of hates flash because they associate it with the ads, and the "bad youtube player", and just ignore the large amount of games and animations that were made in it, or assume they could just be ported to another platform. Kind of sucks to keep seeing conversations on hacker news or reddit, even today, where people ignore what flash actually was.

- **What didn't you like about Flash as a platform, either during its peak or fall? Anything specifically egregious worth mentioning?**

- **Around what point did Flash stop becoming profitable and/or getting enough back to cover development time? Did this make you want to stop making Flash games?**

At its peak, you could usually get around $7-10k for a sponsorship on a game. If you have to split that 2 ways (programmer / artist), you would have to make about one good game per month to survive. It can be hard to keep up that kind of output when the quality threshold kept going up, and when living expenses keep going up. A lot of flash devs were teens as well, so I think part of it was just a lot of kids becoming adults and suddenly needing to actually support themselves financially and finding it hard to do that on flash games alone. For me, I just wanted to make bigger and better games, and flash was not very well suited for big projects.

- **How many people were still playing your games at the end? Did you ever find out overall total player numbers? Any thoughts on those numbers?**
- **Any opinions on the state of the indie gamedev industry, and what it was like compared to Flash at its rise & peak?**

I still consider myself a member of the Indie gamedev community, but its very different than the flash community. The flash community was great, and everyone was awesome, and it felt a lot like just a big group of friends trying to do cool things. The indie community is great in some ways, but a focus on money and business kind of makes it feel weirder sometimes. It's like the difference between a hobby and a job.

- **How do you feel about Flash having gone away from browsers? Do you miss it? What do you miss the most about it?**
- **If you could do it all again, would you?**
- **What have you been up to since Flash left the public consciousness?**

Commercial games:

Closure (2012, PS3 & steam)
The Basement Collection (2012, steam)
Bombernauts (2014, steam)
The End Is Nigh (2017, steam, switch, & PS4)
Mewgenics (TBD, steam + ???)

- **What do you think of efforts like AwayFL and Ruffle? Do you think they might recapture the magic of Flash in the browser if ever completed?**

Stuff like Ruffle is very very important for preservation, but I'm doubtful it recapture the magic of 2004-2012 flash dev scene at this point. Flash itself has too much baggage, and while the tool is wonderful, it's not exactly great technically.

- **Speaking of recapturing the magic, how do you feel about HTML5 games today?**

HTML5 couldn’t do what flash could do, thats why there was a period of like 8 years where the only HTML5 games to come out were incremental idle/clicker games. They’re slowly getting better, and the addition of webasm / emscripten has made it so most tools can export to web, but it took like 10 years to get there and the scene died in the meantime. Might be making a comeback though.

- **How can we play your games now that Flash has been exorcised from most browsers?**

Half of them play well with Ruffle and should work fine on newgrounds. The other half will eventually play well on Ruffle. Closure (flash version) will probably be the last game that works on Ruffle cause of its use of an obscure technology that is probably last on their list to port.

- **Are you still using Flash for anything in particular today?**

We use flash for art and animation in our current commercial projects. I got a cool custom C++/OpenGL game engine that can load in SWF files and make their assets accessible for use in any way I want. It’s great.

- **Anything else you want to say?**